

Watson Park — Status Update

September 2006

Dear Resident:

We are writing to update you on the progress of the environmental site investigation at Watson Park and the next steps toward park restoration. This past April, the City and the California State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) jointly announced that the boundaries of the former landfill at Watson Park had mostly been established through a systematic soil sampling program. Two exceptions were pointed out — a portion along Coyote Creek and a portion along the southern boundary near Terrace Drive. Subsequently, DTSC approved additional soil sampling on nine residential properties on the eastern side of Terrace Drive.

COMPLETION OF SOIL REMOVAL PROJECT

This summer, under DTSC oversight, the City removed contaminated soil from eight backyards on the eastern side of Terrace Drive. The backyards were then refilled with clean soil.

Soil Stockpile: The soil removed from residential backyards is in a fenced-off section of Watson Park and is covered in plastic and secured with sandbags. The final disposition of this soil will be addressed as part of the overall remediation plan for Watson Park.

Debris Piles: Although the City intended to dispose of the debris piles (fences and concrete removed from the backyards) immediately after the soil excavation, the landfill notified the City that the debris had to be tested before disposal. This material is now being tested to determine the best disposal option. Once that determination is made, the debris piles will be hauled off site.

VOLUNTARY SOIL SAMPLING ON TERRACE DRIVE

This August, City Council approved plans to conduct soil sampling on additional private properties on Terrace Drive in response to expressions of interest by some of the Terrace Drive homeowners who were not part of the original soil removal project. The soil sampling will be conducted on a voluntary basis and is not considered part of the Watson Park environmental studies and cleanup.

The project will be undertaken in two phases. Phase I began the week of September 18 and involves only the public right-of-way. The City's consultant (URS Corporation) has taken soil samples in the street on Terrace Drive as close as possible to the front curb of each of the remaining 14 homes. A probe was used to push a two-inch diameter tube below the surface to extract continuous soil cores until reaching the depth of native soil (generally 5 to 15 feet deep). The samples were inspected visually for evidence of burn ash debris and then sent to a laboratory for analysis. Results will take approximately four weeks and will be shared first with property owners. If burn ash debris and/or contamination above screening levels is found, further sampling would be proposed.

Phase II of the project would begin after City staff has met one-on-one with homeowners to determine who is interested in participating in the voluntary program. After all interested homeowners have signed Right of Entry Agreements to grant the City permission to conduct the tests, the sampling work will begin.

FALL COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community Meeting on Final Report: The analytical results of the soil samples taken on private properties on the eastern side of Terrace Drive will become part of the Final Waste Characterization Report on Watson Park. The report will describe the final horizontal boundaries of the former landfill and the depth at which contaminants were found. DTSC staff are currently reviewing the draft report. After DTSC approves the Final Report, they will host a public meeting to discuss the findings. This meeting will take place in late October or early November. DTSC will develop a Fact Sheet, which describes the site investigation and what was found, and distribute it prior to the community meeting.

Community Meeting on Park Planning: In July, the Capital Project Advisory Committee (CPAC) met to review preliminary concepts of how the park design elements valued by the community may be integrated into a layout for a restored Watson Park. The City's design team will continue the park planning effort once the Final Waste Characterization Study is available. A community meeting to discuss park planning is targeted for this November. The community will be notified once a firm date is set.

PARK MAINTENANCE

To keep Watson Park looking clean and green during the growing season, the City contractor is making final repairs to the irrigation system. The grass clippings that are usually left behind to nourish the ground after mowing will instead be picked up to prevent thatch buildup and browning of the grass. Mowing will continue on a regular basis and weeds will also be trimmed. For question or concerns about park maintenance, contact Mike Will, Acting Parks Manager, at (408) 277-2734.

AVAILABILITY OF WORK PLANS

Final documents regarding the Watson Park project are available at:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library

150 East San Fernando Street
2nd Floor Reference Desk

Hours, August 23 - December 17, 2006

Monday - Thursday 8:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Friday 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Sunday 1:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Wed., Nov. 22 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Reference Desk is self-service
before 9:00 AM & after 9:00 PM

Documents are indexed as follows:

Watson Park Work Plan - REF TD797.W67x2006
Terrace Drive Work Plan - REF TD797.S65x2006

Northside Community Center

488 North 6th Street

Hours: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Empire Gardens Elementary School

1060 East Empire Street

Hours: 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Website: www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/watsonpark/WatsonReports.asp

City: Ed Bautista, (408) 535-3570 (Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services)

DTSC: Kim Rhodes, (916) 255-3651 (Public Participation Program)